Proposal for a Minor Program in Museum and Exhibition Studies

Ramapo College of New Jersey

December 2017

Program Summary

The Museum and Exhibition Studies Minor would be a five-course program, drawing largely on pre-existing strengths and courses at the college. It would serve students interested in museum and exhibition careers. The minor program would combine historical and theoretical study with an internship or the opportunity to engage in the analysis of emerging museum and exhibition practices.

Lead Faculty

Meredith Davis, Associate Professor of Art History, School of Contemporary Arts

Stephen Rice, Professor of American Studies, Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies

Faculty in Anthropology and History have also contributed to the development of this program, and would teach courses that would be included in the minor.

Objectives

To offer a combination of courses, advisement, and mentoring to students interested in careers involving museum and exhibition work, or in the role of museums in American culture.

Structure

The minor will require five courses (twenty credits) earned from the following:

1. AMER 3XX The History of Museums in America. This new course will cover a three-century history from Jefferson’s “Indian Hall” to Barnum’s American Museum to the most recent developments in the United States. The course would be offered each spring and would include a trip to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC

2. HIST 302 Public History (taught annually)

3. One course from the "Foundations"" list below.

4. One course from either the "Foundations" list, or a course from the "Electives" list below. For this fourth course a student could elect to do a convener-approved independent study. The convener could also approve an alternative course not included on either list.

5. A co-op or internship at a relevant site.

Foundations:

AMER 225 Introduction to American Studies

AMER 311/ARHT 311 American Photography and Visual Culture

AMER 322/ARHT 322 American Art I: Contact to 1865

AMER 327/ARHT 325 American Art 1865-1945

ANTH 223 World Cultures

EDUC 221 Social Context of Education

HIST 201 Historiography

HIST 305 Discovering Digital History

Electives

ARHT 204 Introduction to Non-Western Art Traditions

ARHT 205 Introduction to African Art

ARHT 214 Photography: Concepts and History

ARHT 225 History and Concepts of 20th Century Art

ARHT 245 Masterpieces of Western Civilization.

ARHT 301 Art Since 1945

ARHT 335 19th Century European Art and Design

ARHT 337 Photography and Africa

ARHT 338 European Avant-Garde Art and Design

COMM 213 Design Theory and Criticism

COMM 359 Digital Culture

HIST 289 Islamic Art and Architecture

HIST 340 Biblical Archaeology and History

SOSC 303 Sociology and Culture

Assessment Plan

The minor program in Museum and Exhibition Studies will have three core learning objectives:

1. students will demonstrate knowledge of the history, organization, practices, and purposes of museums and related institutions

2. students will demonstrate understanding of a variety of approaches to identifying, interpreting, and exhibiting images, objects, and archival documents

3. students will demonstrate awareness of different cultural patterns and contexts and how these have shaped museum and exhibition practices

The minor program is structured so that these objectives will be pursued as follows:

Objective 1

The History of Museums in America

Public History

List A elective

Co-op or internship

Objective 2

The History of Museums in America

List A elective

Co-op or internship

Objective 3

The History of Museums in America

Public History

List A and List B elective

Co-op or internship

Assessment will be conducted annually using both direct measures, including rubric-based evaluation of student papers, and indirect measures, including an annual spring event that will combine student presentations on internship and independent study projects with a focus group discussion.

Resource Impact on Other Programs

None foreseen, except perhaps a more diverse population of students in some of the classes included in the minor, such as World Cultures or Public History. We anticipate some interest from students studying education as well.

Student Demand and Program Need

Student interest in careers working in museums and public institutions has grown as these institutions expand their public profiles. In programs such as Visual Arts, History, American Studies, and Anthropology, faculty have regularly encountered students interested in this field.

Museums, science centers, historical societies and cultural centers play an increasingly important role in our civic culture. Alongside these traditional venues, other types of public institutions, from the Southern Poverty Law Center to the Red Cross, use on-site and online exhibits to interface with the public, share their message, and conduct outreach. Museums and cultural institutions increasingly put their educational role at the forefront of their mission.

In addition to education, many career opportunities in areas such as development, marketing, and virtual exhibition design have been pursued by Ramapo College students in recent years. A museum studies minor adds the intellectual and academic perspectives within the field, and will allow us to further build relationships with institutions off campus. Internship and career opportunities abound in institutions from local historical societies to science centers and history museums.

Alignment with the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan has the goal of encouraging students to have meaningful off-campus experiences. This minor would support that. It draws on our proximity to New York City, but we hope that students will also engage with the local community – through work with area historical societies, art centers, and museums.

Feasibility

This program will require no new faculty.

This program will require the addition of one new class, to be cross-listed between Art History and American Studies. We believe that this course, to be offered alternately by professors Rice and Davis, will successfully enroll.

The minor may be small at first, but it will serve a select group of students right away. We also believe that it has the potential to grow into a popular interdisciplinary minor, drawing on emerging areas of study at the college, including public relations and multi-media journalism.

Comparison with Similar Programs in State and COPLAC Schools

This program is in line with programs offered at similar institutions. For example, Caldwell College offers a minor in Museum Studies. It is an 18-credit program, and similar to the one proposed here in many ways – it includes an internship, a Public History course, an Introduction to Museology course (whereas our introductory course is historical), and an anthropology course. DePaul University also offers a minor in Museum Studies. Again, this program is similar to what we propose, with a survey course, a Public History course, an anthropology course and an internship as core elements. Saint Mary’s College of Maryland, another COPLAC school, has similar requirements. Lists of required courses and links to the minor’s webpage for all three are provided in the Appendix.

Anticipated Enrollment from Launch to Optimal Level

The new course, *The History of Museums in America* would ideally be offered in spring 2019, and would attract a first group of at least 10 students, with some declaring the minor right away. We hope to gain students each year by publicizing the minor on campus and within relevant majors, co-sponsoring a free museum visit by teaming up with a club or student group, and conducting outreach with the help of the offices of Enrollment Management and Student Success. Optimal size for the program would be 15 to 20 students per class year.

Resources

While not necessary, this program would benefit from financial support for students who could not otherwise afford to take unpaid internships. Faculty noted the presence of such funding at other COPLAC schools, such as Saint Mary’s College of Maryland, where a donor has developed the Martin E. Sullivan Museum Scholar’s Fund. See here: <http://www.smcm.edu/museumstudies/academic-offerings/what-you-learn/requirements/>.

In addition, the program would like to include a study trip to Washington, DC as a part of the required course, AMER 3XX The History of Museums in America. While a foundation grant would be sought in early years to support this initiative, with the argument that it would build interest in the minor, a more guaranteed source of funding for the trip would eventually have to be found, if it were to run annually. Grant-seeking or fundraising efforts are certainly feasible.

Other Details

* No more than two courses may overlap with the student’s major.
* The co-op/internship could be either 2 or 4 credits and must be relevant to the student’s interest within the fields of museum and exhibition studies. A co-op done for the student’s major, in an unrelated area, would not count here.

DePaul University: Minor in Museum Studies

Top of Form

​Link to the minor webpage: <https://www.depaul.edu/university-catalog/degree-requirements/undergraduate/class/museum-studies-minor)/Pages/default.aspx>

Course Requirements

Six courses are required -- at least two of which must be from the Core and three-four from Electives (i.e., two Core + four Electives OR three Core + three Electives), with no more than two Electives from any one department:

Core (At least two of the following):

* ANT 374 ANTHROPOLOGY AND MUSEUMS
* HAA 391 MUSEUM STUDIES
* HST 269 MUSEUMS, MATERIAL CULTURE AND MEMORY: INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HISTORY

Electives

(Choose three - four of the following, with no more than two from any department):

* ANT 250 MATERIAL CULTURE OF MODERN AMERICA
* ANT 252 MATERIAL CULTURE AND DOMESTIC LIFE
* ANT 256 MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE OLD WORLD
* ANT 378 MUSEUM EDUCATION
* ANT 380 INTERNSHIP IN ANTHROPOLOGY
* ANT 382 HERITAGE DISPLAYS AND MUSEUMS
* HAA 291 EXPLORING MUSEUM PROFESSION AND PRACTICE: CHICAGO MUSEUMS AS CASE STUDY
* HAA 397 SPECIAL TOPICS/HISTORY OF ART & ARCHITECTURE: ​MUSEUM STUDIES
* HAA 398 INDEPENDENT STUDY
* HST 360 DOING DIGITAL HISTORY
* HST 382 CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM EXPERIENCE
* HST 389 TOPICS IN PUBLIC HISTORY
* HST 391 DOING LOCAL AND COMMUNITY HISTORY
* HST 392 PUBLIC HISTORY INTERNSHIP

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Caldwell College**: Minor in Museum Studies**

**Link to the college webpage on the minor:** <https://www.caldwell.edu/academics/majors-minors/art-degrees/art-minors-2>

Students who wish to pursue a minor in museum studies must complete 18 credits which includes one 3-credit internship.   
These mustinclude:   
AH 211 Introduction to Museology   
AH 360 Critical Issues in Museology   
HI 378 Public History   
One of the following:   
AH 122 Language of World Art   
AH 212 World Art I   
AH 214 Modern Art   
AH 215 World Art II   
One of the following:   
AN 225 Cultural Anthropology   
AR 357 Web Design   
BU 221 Marketing   
BU 330 Principles of Management   
CO 230 Public Speaking   
CS 230 Emerging Technologies

Saint Mary’s College of Maryland: Minor in Museum Studies

Link to the webpage for the Minor: <http://www.smcm.edu/museumstudies/academic-offerings/what-you-learn/requirements/>

# Requirements

# Degree Requirements for the Museum Studies Minor

## General College Requirements

* General College Requirements.
* All requirements of the chosen major field.

## Required Course

* One required four-credit, 200-level course, “Introduction to Museum Studies” (MUST 200).

## Elective Courses

At least 12 hours of appropriate electives with museum studies focus, eight of which need to be upper-level, selected from at least two disciplines.

Completion of a single eight-credit internship in a museum-related area of study; upon approval of the program coordinator, two four-credit internships may be substituted.